

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BANGKO 35699 220810Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 HA-05 ACDA-12 /102 W

-----123260 220814Z /17

P R 220722Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6453

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 35699

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MILI, TH, CB, VM

SUBJ: CAMBODIANS SHOOT DOWN THAI MILITARY PLANE

SUMMARY: CAMBODIANS SHOT DOWN A ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE OV-10 BRONCO, DURING A RETALIATORY STRAFFING MISSION ON THE CAMBODIAN BORDER SOUTH OF ARANYAPRATHET, THAILAND ON DEC. 21. SUPREME COMMAND J-2 STATES THE INCIDENT RESULTED FROM A "LUCKY SHOT" AND IS NOT CONSIDERED A SIGN OF ESCALATION BY CAMBODIANS. THAI RETALIATION IS DESIGNED TO SHOW THAI MILITARY MUSCLE BUT THAIS STILL HOPE FOR DIPLOMATIC RESOLUTION OF BORDER DIFFICULTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. SUPREME COMMAND J-2 OFFICIAL PROVIDED EMBASSY FOLLOWING BRIEFING ON DEC. 21 BORDER INCIDENT WHICH RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF ONE RTAF OV-10 AIRCRAFT: CAMBODIANS BEGAN LAUNCHING M-79 MORTAR SHELLS DEC. 21 AT 1330 INTO THE BAAN KOK SABANG, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BANGKO 35699 220810Z

KLONG NAM SAI AREA ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS SOUTH OF ARANYAPRATHET, THE SAME AREA WHERE FIFTEEN THAI VILLAGERS WERE KILLED LAST WEEK AND WHERE, SUBSEQUENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN ALMOST DAILY EXCHANGE OF FIRE, INITIATED USUALLY BY THE CAMBODIANS. THAI ARMY AND AIRFORCE REPLIED IN KIND, INCLUDING STRAFFING OF TARGETS ALONG THE BORDER, SEEKING POINTS OF ORIGIN OF CAMBODIAN FIRE. A ROYAL

THAI AIR FORCE OV-10 BRONCO WAS HIT BY SHELL FROM US 50 CALIBRE OR COMMUNIST EQUIVALENT GUN, THE CUSTOMARY WEAPON EMPLOYED IN THE AREA BY THE CAMBODIANS. TWO THAI PILOTS EJECTED AND WERE RECOVERED ALONG THE BORDER; ONE WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED. THE PLANE FELL APPROXIMATELY THREE KILOMETERS INSIDE CAMBODIAN TERRITORY, THE FIRST THAI PLANE TO BE SHOT DOWN BY THE CAMBODIANS.

2. J-2 OFFICIAL NOTED THAT FROM THE THAI STANDPOINT, "UNLESS THAI FORCES DO SOMETHING VISIBLE TO SHOW THEY EXIST IT WOULD BE VERY BAD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE THAI PEOPLE. THAI MILITARY MUST SHOW SOME MUSCLE TO RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE AND LOYALTY OF THE PEOPLE." OFFICIAL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT REACTION WOULD CONTINUE TO BE DEFENSIVE AND TAILORED TO CAMBODIAN ACTIVITIES, WHILE RTG TRIES TO RESOLVE BORDER DIFFICULTIES THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

3. ALTHOUGH PRESS COVERAGE TERMED THE DEVELOPMENT A SIGNIFICANT ESCALATION, J-2 OFFICIAL CALLED THE INCIDENT A "LUCKY SHOT" WITH BOTH SIDES EMPLOYING WEAPONRY AT LEVELS USUAL IN RECENT DAYS AND WEEKS.

4. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT RTG HAD MADE "REPRESENTATION" IN VIENTIANE TO CAMBODIANS ASSERTING THAT RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS COULD SPOIL THE FRAGILE RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA BUT STATING THAT THAILAND IS STILL WILLING AND READY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA. OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE PM DEPARTS DEC 22 FOR A VISIT TO THE BORDER  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BANGKO 35699 220810Z

AREAS WITH CAMBODIA INCLUDING POSSIBLY THE ARANYAPRATHET SECTION.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE THE J-2 CHARACTERIZATION OF THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT AS A LUCKY SHOT, THE INCIDENT PROBABLY WILL ADD TO PUBLIC EXASPERATION OVER CAMBODIAN ATTACKS AND INCREASE PRESSURE WITHIN THE RTG TO REACT WITH GREATER FORCE. NEVERTHELESS, THE RTG APPEARS DETERMINED TO TRY TO PREVENT ANY MILITARY ESCALATION ON THE BORDER AND TO CONTINUE ITS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO RESOLVE BORDER DIFFICULTIES AND IMPROVE ITS OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH PHNOM PENH.  
O'DONOHUE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY MISSIONS, AIR FORCE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 22-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977BANGKO35699  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770477-0444  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** BANGKOK  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19771228/aaaaaxeg.tel  
**Line Count:** 105  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 6a1f49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 149947  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CAMBODIANS SHOOT DOWN THAI MILITARY PLANE SUMMARY: CAMBODIANS SHOT DOWN A ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE OV-10 BRONCO, DURING A RETALIATORY STRAFFING MISSION ON  
**TAGS:** PBOR, MILI, TH, CB, VM  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/6a1f49fe-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009